

April 3, 2007
Milton, Florida

The Marine Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Vice Chairman Jeff Marker and members Rick Harris and Billy Kimbrough. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker), County Engineer (Roger Blaylock), and Marine Extension Agent (Christina Verlinde). Vice Chairman Marker called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. He said there is not a quorum so the meeting was for informational purposes only.

Marker introduced the new member representing District 1, Rick Harris.

Marker acknowledged Mr. Nichols from the audience. He said Nichols is interested in Oyster Restoration projects. Marker said he and Nichols are both interested in enhancing the quality of the water in our fisheries, and they both felt that everything needs to be done to put as much oyster shell in the water as possible. He said this practice will help the water quality in our area.

Marker said he recently met with Jim Lappert with the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection). He said Lappert has been placing small reef projects in Blackwater Bay around the Escobar Point area. Marker said permitting for these reef projects takes about 8 months per spot once they are identified. He said he and Lappert discussed efforts to identify the shallow reefs before someone runs into them.

Marker asked if Walter Marine has done anything on monitoring of artificial reefs in area waters. Verlinde said she has not contacted Walter Marine about this issue, but she will. Marker said he would like to know if any monitoring has been done and if Walter Marine is willing to present some of the monitoring information to the Marine Advisory Board.

Marker said there is a derelict vessel in the water at Garcon Point by the bridge. Blaylock said he believes the owner has been contacted and directed to remove the vessel. Marker said if the owner does not remove the vessel within a reasonable amount of time, he will request formal action be taken to have the vessel removed by the county. He said the county will then need to charge the owner for the cost of moving the vessel. Harris said he felt the derelict vessel is a hazard and is amazed nothing has already been done to remove it. He said a lot of boats go floundering through this area at night, and the vessel may not be seen. Harris said the buoy that was marking the vessel is gone. Marker said the vessel needs to be removed before someone gets hurt. He said the Marine Advisory Committee can front the money to have the vessel removed. Walker asked staff about regulations concerning removal of derelict vessels. Blaylock said staff will get with Avis Whitfield concerning derelict vessel issues. Walker said vessel registration funds can possibly be used to fund the removal of derelict vessels.

Kimbrough arrived. This additional committee member created a quorum.

Marker moved approval of the minutes from the January 9, 2007 meeting and the minutes from the February 6, 2007 informational session; Harris seconded, and the vote carried unanimously. (3-0)

Kimbrough said he has heard good comments about the new facilities at Sandy Landing. He said having restrooms at Sandy Landing is a good idea. Marker asked if portable restroom facilities are in place along the boat ramps in Santa Rosa County. Walker said he believes these facilities are in place but said he will check to make sure. Marker said he wants to make sure a portable toilet is put at Oriole Beach boat camp. Kimbrough asked if there are portable toilets at any other locations. Walker said there are other locations that had portable toilets last year on a trial basis. Marker asked if there have been any issues with the portable toilet at Sandy Landing. Walker said no.

Kimbrough moved for staff to look into the possibility of putting portable toilets at Keyser Landing, Webb Landing, and the landing owned by Santa Rosa County by the Exxon Plant; Harris seconded, and the vote carried unanimously. (3-0)

Kimbrough thanked Park staff for the work they provide to Santa Rosa County.

Harris said he and Avis Whitfield went down to the Garcon Point Boat Ramp a while back to look at the feasibility of putting in a step down and a walkway for safety reasons. He said he thought the county was planning to do the project but then Hurricane Ivan & Dennis made landfall. Harris said he wants to know the status of the project. He described the conditions of the Garcon Point Boat Ramp and made specific suggestions with regard to a step down and wooden dock. Blaylock said a permit will be required for the project due to environmental issues. Walker said he will ask Whitfield to check into the proposed project and bring something back to the Marine Advisory Board.

Harris said the Simpson River Pier is a wonderful place and a lot of people are using it. He said boats are being launched at the pier, and he felt this is a liability issue. Harris said he felt something needs to be done about boats being launched at the pier.

Harris moved for the Simpson River Pier launching area be restricted for use by non-motorized vessels only; Kimbrough seconded, and the vote carried unanimously. (3-0)

Waterway Access Funding Alternatives

Marker gave a brief overview of information submitted to the Marine Advisory Committee concerning funding ideas for future acquisition of waterfront access property for public use. He said the Marine Advisory Committee has been working hard for 1½ years on how to fund this project. Marker said a recommendation will be made to the Board of County Commissioners once

funding is available and all members of the Marine Advisory Committee are appointed.

Chairman Items

Marker said he received an email regarding the Navarre Beach Boat Ramp. He said a citizen was concerned the ramp was being washed out underneath. Blaylock said the ramp was built properly, and there is not a problem with it being washed out.

The next scheduled meeting of the Marine Advisory Committee will be on Tuesday, May 1, 2007 at 5:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Marine Advisory Committee at this time, the meeting adjourned at 5:30p.m.